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Epistles

Multiple

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“To be known and read” by all. . .

Satis Verborum

I have received and read every issue of *PD* and enjoyed them all. But for me, 5:2/2000, is the very best. I enjoyed your thumbnail comments about the General Conference presidents whom you have known and with whom you worked. I thought the President’s Page really set the tone. And something else I rarely do—I read and enjoyed every word from Hegstad to Davidson. I do hope you will be able to present more issues of *PD* like this one.

Norman Spuehler
Columbus, Ohio

Unsettled Minds

Thank you for the last issue of *PD* (5:1/2000), especially the article “How Our Minds Are Being Changed.” I’ve been critical of your “no stand on women’s ordination.” However, as I read between the lines, the Editor is, along with many of the members of the church he attends, in favor—if it comes to a vote. This just doesn’t seem to me the way important issues should be settled, especially when the matter has been voted on at a previous General Conference session.

I’m enclosing the check for this

year—if I’ve not paid up for it. I was thinking of discontinuing subscribing to it because of your failure to take an ultimate stand on issues.

Wilfred Nagao
Honolulu, Hawaii

No Time to Waste on What People Think

I was absolutely ashamed of the *Perspective Digest* I received [at General Conference in Toronto]. Where is anything there but MAN’s thoughts about what MAN has said about what he thinks about something!

Jesus commanded US—each one who has been baptized into His church—to TEACH all things whatsoever I (only one “I” and that is JESUS) have commanded you. Why are we busy discussing someone else’s thought about what they think of whatever it is someone else thinks???

As Seventh-day Adventists, we are in this world ONLY to GET Jesus’ message out to lost souls, and there is no time to waste on what people think.

As the end-time people of God, we have a commission to fulfill. If there is any question about what is

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meant in what we read, this church is blessed with the ONLY trustworthy explanation of God's WORD—the SPIRIT OF PROPHECY. Is there any reason that we, as a people, cannot discuss what the Bible says in the light of its magnifying glass—given to us by the MASTER Himself, so we won't go off on tangents as the other churches do?

I am perplexed to find an answer to why we have WANDERED SO FAR AWAY FROM the thoughts of the Bible. . . . Have we lost the messages and now depend on man's intelligence to have something to say?

I wonder how God looks at our wasting HIS TIME to discuss things of no importance to man's salvation. Never mind correcting man's ideas—just TELL GOD'S ideas, and maybe we'll get home sooner than we expect. . . . It seems we have lost the vision of a SOON COMING CHRIST to get the world excited about. So sorry about the lost vision.

Bev Pfannmuller

Devon, Alberta

The Theologized Sanctuary

Roy Gane's article on the "Sanctuary Doctrine" (5:2/2000) confirmed my belief that we have over-theologized it. This is certainly true if one has to claw "through the

details of the Hebrew text" and if the DARCOM series is too difficult even for M.Div. students! In my humble (not very) opinion, the "Sanctuary Doctrine" can be reduced to two essential facts: (a) There is a pre-advent judgment, and (b) Jesus is our High Priest and Advocate.

In the 40 days after the Resurrection, when Jesus "spoke about the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3, NIV), only two subjects are mentioned: the gospel commission and the promised Holy Spirit. No doctrine is mentioned in Acts 1. Later, however, Peter mentions a doctrine all followers of Christ were *commanded* to preach: "He commanded us to preach. . . and to testify that he is the one who God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. . . everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (NIV). This is the heart of what we clumsily call "the third angel's message." Peter made it simple. He did not find it necessary to claw through Leviticus. Preaching to Gentiles, unfamiliar with Scripture, he simply said, You are going to be judged, but you can be free of condemnation through Jesus Christ.

Only when writing to the Hebrews, who were acquainted, no doubt, with Leviticus, Paul found it necessary to go into the Old Testament details. They are available for

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those who need it.

Daniel 7 is also very clear. God pronounces judgment “*in favor of the saints.*” A few years ago, Elder Bill Johnsson preached a sermon at a division-wide meeting at Avondale College. He asked the workers present to tell what aspect of the Advent message was the most joyful to them. I had walked in late and sat at the back but listened with intense interest. Not one person mentioned the investigative judgment. The Spirit urged me to get up and shout it out with gladness, but by nature I am shy, and I told myself I was an uninvited guest. Regretfully, I remained silent.

We are often too tradition bound in our thinking, but search for truth requires a critical evaluation of the past. If we do not correct mistakes or if we hold tenaciously to issues that are no longer relevant, people will reject our message.

The judgment is good news. My only regret is that I will not be personally present, for Satan, the accuser of the brethren, will come with a full folio of documentary evidence of my sinfulness (no doubt pulled up from my DNA, as scientists would like to do with dinosaurs!). In imagination I can see my name coming up. Gleefully Old Nick shuffles his files to find his favorite

successes and claim me as his subject. Then he looks up at the screen again. How I would love to see his jaw drop and consternation overtake him. My name is there for all to see, but beneath my name is not the record of my life, it is the life of Jesus. My sins were paid for on the cross and the verdict of the grand jury is “If the evidence does not fit, you have to acquit.” I go free! I have a “right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.”

Our endemic legalism and its bedfellow perfectionism have been so percussive that the gospel has not been heard clearly. Remember, “Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes” (Zech. 3:3, NIV). The Lord rebukes the accuser, and through His angel, says to Joshua, “See, I have taken away your sin.” Put clean garments on him. (See also *Great Controversy*, page. 484; *Testimonies*, volume 5, pages 467ff, and Ellen G. White Manuscript Release No. 1208.)

The gospel in the judgment is biblical. It is encouraging. It is simple. It is the “third angel’s message in verity” (*Evangelism*, p. 190).

Lyndon K. McDowell
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